

THE VALUE OF EVENT NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS: EVIDENCE FROM A MULTIANNUAL CULTURAL PROGRAM

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This article analyzes how a city can generate instrumental, intrinsic, and institutional value from its event-related networks and platforms, based on the Hieronymus Bosch 500 program in the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch). Interviews with key stakeholders traced program dynamics over more than a decade to reveal processes of network and platform development, encapsulated in a conceptual model of strategic value creation. The results indicate that networks served to generate flows of resources, while programming helped develop platforms for knowledge generation and dissemination, helping to focus attention on the city. The Bosch 500 Foundation managing the program played an effective role in developing and supporting networks, which in turn generated significant short-term instrumental and intrinsic value. However, the failure to establish a sustainable city-wide platform related to the Bosch program caused institutional value destruction, which many saw as a missed opportunity. The study of networks and platforms can benefit from a longitudinal approach as well as a broader, contextual view of event networks.

Key words: Event networks; Event platforms; Value creation; Event legacy;
's-Hertogenbosch

Introduction

Cities use events to build their image, boost their economy, or strengthen social cohesion, and events also use cities, as sites of celebration, as an access route to consumers, and as stages and backdrops (Wynn, 2015). Cities are increasingly structuring their event policies to maximize these outcomes, for example through the design of eventful city strategies, the creation of event portfolios, and

the development of entire “eventscares” (Brown, 2019). However, a challenge in implementing such strategies is the need to combine external projection to attract attention with internal cohesion to provide local support. The development of networks (both internal stakeholder networks and external relationship networks) and platforms (to provide a profile for the event and a focus of attention for audiences) become crucial aspects of successful event strategies.

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Previous research has analyzed the development of event networks and the role of cities as hubs within networks, but to date little attention has been paid to how event networks can shape a city, or the ways a city can influence these networks. Understanding these relationships becomes more important as urban networks grow. As Fernández de Losada (2019) noted, recent years have seen a tremendous increase in new forms of city networks, which are usually issue driven and private sector led. These new networks are also ushering in new forms of events, such as city festivals and “festive urban events” (Miranda, 2010), which aim to change the city itself. But there is still relatively little research on the value creation role of event networks and platforms in cities. In particular, the ways in which event platforms and networks can be used to generate long-term value for cities are poorly understood.

Therefore, the current article addresses the basic question: how can a city generate long-term strategic value from its event-related networks and platforms? The general assumption is that by building event platforms and connecting these to (inter) national networks, added value can be generated for the city and for the events that are held there. We examine this assumption using a single case study of the Dutch city of ‘s-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch) and its development of event networks and platforms over a 10-year period.

Literature Review

In developing a conceptual basis for the current study, we review previous work on value creation in events and event networks. We pay particular attention to the development of cultural and public value through events to develop a model of strategic value creation, which also distinguishes the role of networks and platforms.

Value Creation in Events and Event Networks

In assessing the value that a city can generate through events, it is important to consider the concept of value. Event value is most frequently measured in terms of short-term forms of value creation, such as the economic, social, or cultural impacts of an event (e.g., Richards et al., 2013; Wood, 2005).

Such studies provide an indication of the volume of value created, but seldom help to illuminate the process of value creation.

A recent volume analyzing the value of events (Lundberg et al., 2017) argued that both the extrinsic value of events in terms of externalities as well as the intrinsic value derived by event attendees should be analyzed. Many contributions to this volume argued for more attention to be paid to the consumer perspective, and to the value created between attendees through experience cocreation. The analysis of intrinsic value derived by event visitors is often based on Holbrook’s (1999) conception of value as something that resides in the consumption experience. This service-dominant marketing paradigm views events as a value creation space (Crowther & Donlan, 2011), and focuses on the different ways in which consumers derive value from attending events. Rihova et al. (2013) extended this to a “customer-dominant logic” in which service providers offer value propositions to event visitors. Value creation has also been conceptualized as a cocreation process, in which event attendees derive value from their interactions with each other. As Van Winkle and Bueddefeld (2016) indicated, the shift to service- or customer-dominant value creation perspectives implies certain principles, such as seeing value creation as being beneficiary determined, cocreated with customers and relational in nature. The range of value beneficiaries in such approaches are usually limited to the event participants themselves.

Festival attendees may derive individual intrinsic values such as identity or happiness, but nonattendees in the wider community also benefit from collective value creation in terms of increased social capital or attendee expenditure in the festival location. The value of events may also extend to people who do not attend, or nonuse values (Andersson et al., 2012). This work suggests that event value should be considered not just in terms of the immediate utility derived by consumers of the event itself, but also the wider values accruing to other collectives and stakeholders.

Holden (2006) attempted to bring together different forms of value in the concept of “cultural value.” He was particularly concerned with culture produced for and consumed by the public, and the notion of cultural value is therefore closely aligned

to ideas about public value (Moore, 1995). In Holden's (2006) view, "value is located in the encounter or interaction between individuals (who will have all sorts of preexisting attitudes, beliefs and levels of knowledge) on the one hand, and an object or experience on the other" (p. 15). Holden identifies three types of value generated by publicly funded culture:

- Intrinsic value, or the capacity of culture to affect people.
- Instrumental value, or the ancillary effects of culture, where culture is used to achieve a social or economic purpose.
- Institutional value, or the processes, techniques, and practices that organizations adopt in working to create value for the public.

This conception of value can be useful in analyzing event networks, because it covers the immediate use value for event participants (intrinsic value), as well as broader nonuse value creation for indirect stakeholders (instrumental value), and the value derived by event organizers and funders from the event (institutional value). Such a framework also supports a network approach to value analysis, because it offers the possibility of tracing the flows of different kinds of value through the wider networks supporting an event.

Value in Event Networks

Event networks have gained more research attention in recent years. Many studies have concentrated on the relationships developed between event stakeholders, or between events and their local or regional contexts (Einarsen & Mykletun, 2009; Getz et al., 2006; Misener & Mason, 2006; Todd et al., 2017). More specific studies of event network value creation have also emerged, such as Einarsen and Mykletun's (2009) analysis of the Stavanger Food Festival in Norway, which indicated that networks were important for the creation, operation, and development of the event. In particular, the event created a network of entrepreneurs, keeping the festival up to date with developments in the field and stimulating a flow of resources, competences, and learning opportunities, enhancing institutional value. In Spain, Sallent et al. (2011) examined the

legacy of city events in sport tourism networks and argued that the sport and the tourism sectors became better integrated into networks after staging a sports event. Subsequently Izzo et al. (2012) analyzed the networks of three Italian arts festivals and concluded that the positioning of individual actors and festivals within networks was important in making connections. They highlighted the role of the "network orchestrator" in partner selection, creating a climate of trust, and leveraging a flow of multiple resources through the networks of the city. Such orchestrators effectively use the institutional value of their strategic position to develop instrumental value from themselves and the city.

Cervenán (2017) later analyzed the role played by the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) as a temporary cluster based on local and translocal networks. These networks provide the linkages or "pipelines" that help to support the local "buzz" in the city (Bathelt et al., 2004). The city is also in turn aware of the need to provide a platform for these networks to ensure their continued success and support. This prompted the opening of the Bell Lightbox film theater in the city in 2010, which provides the headquarters and main venue for the film festival as well as curated year-round programming, a film archive, gallery, and library. This "hub" for the festival was seen as providing an international platform for Canadian film artists (Cervenán, 2017). More recently, Fisker et al. (2019), building on Castells (2009) and Richards (2015) analyzed the links between networks embedded in the local "space of places" and the global "space of flows" as a source of value creation. They argue for translocal network analysis that highlights network context and the interrelationships of actors in the creation and exchange of value.

This review indicates that different facets of value creation are now being embedded in events, extending from the more instrumental categories of economic, social, and cultural value, towards more detailed analysis of the intrinsic value derived by consumers from the event experience. The growth of interest in value creation in event networks also marks increased interest for the institutional value generated by events. However, as Wilson et al. (2017) argued, "the literature rarely discusses the development of festivals over time and the wider networks in which festivals are embedded"

(p. 195). Therefore, the use of networks and associated platforms to generate value for cities has had relatively little previous research attention.

Conceptualizing the Role of Networks and Platforms in Cities

Cities have begun to use event networks as tools to increase the value they can derive from staging events. This is particularly important for cities trying to extend their “reach” beyond the regional or national level to engage global audiences (Fernández de Losada, 2019). Many cities are now members of international networks, which can distribute and exchange knowledge, attract attention, and also channel resources. The city itself can also act as a platform for concentrating, framing, and giving visibility to the flows generated through networks (Bollier, 2015). Richards and Duif (2018) further suggested that programming can be used to develop platforms that support networking activities and value creation over the longer term.

A program is defined by Richards and Duif (2018) as “a relational device that links stakeholders in the city and beyond to a series of actions that together are designed to produce beneficial effects” (p. 48). Program effects can include the development of intrinsic value by creating an engaging experience for participants or strengthening identities, and the generation of instrumental effects, such as social cohesion. A well-designed program should also help to strengthen the practices of the institutions involved, thereby enhancing their potential to create sustainable intrinsic and instrumental value in the future. A combination of networks and platforms would arguably be an appropriate strategy for linking local and global flows of value and securing resources, including (media) attention, flows of resources, symbolic capital, and knowledge accumulation. Events help to make networks tangible, and networks in turn offer a “platform” for a particular sector or issue.

This gives networks and platforms different potential roles in the relationship between cities, economic fields, and events. Networks provide connections to actors external to the city, providing the potential for inflows of knowledge, resources, and people. Networks may consist of a maze of fine or loose connections, or they may also contain much

stronger connections, or “pipelines” as Bathelt et al. (2004) put it. In contrast, a platform does not connect specific actors, but acts in the fashion of a broadcast, sending information that is legitimated by its presence on the platform. The platform can provide content for the network, giving a “buzz” that can be fed into the pipelines (Bathelt et al., 2004). However, to date, the theoretical discussion around platforms and networks in general has been weakly structured. Most studies use the two terms interchangeably (e.g., Fernández de Losada & Abdullah, 2019), indicating a lack of rigor in the use of these concepts.

We try and address this issue by developing a conceptual model of value creation in events (Fig. 1). This indicates that different forms of cultural value (intrinsic, instrumental, and institutional) can be directed through specific practices in the city. As the literature review has indicated, attention has progressively shifted from instrumental value (such as economic impact) to the intrinsic value derived by the consumer (or cocreator) and more recently to the institutional value that can be generated by places using events as a policy tool (such as eventful cities or event portfolio practices). The model highlights the value creation role of event-related networks and platforms, which we see as having complementary, but distinct functions. Event networks help to create and direct flows of resources and attention (Richards, 2013) and platforms create the focus necessary to define a specific field of action (such as a sector of the economy, or a social issue) to create distinctiveness. This strategic value creation system ultimately benefits a range of publics, or stakeholders. We will argue that the value creation system operates within a certain *field* (in this case the cultural field), to develop a *flow* of resources through networks linking the city to the global level, and finally providing a *focus* for those resources in order to generate the desired outcomes for beneficiaries.

The review of the literature also shows a general extension in the concept of value attached to events, which has moved from a consideration of instrumental economic, social, and cultural impacts, to more sophisticated conceptualizations related to the intrinsic value derived by consumers in a service or customer dominated logic or through cocreation. Developments in urban event programs

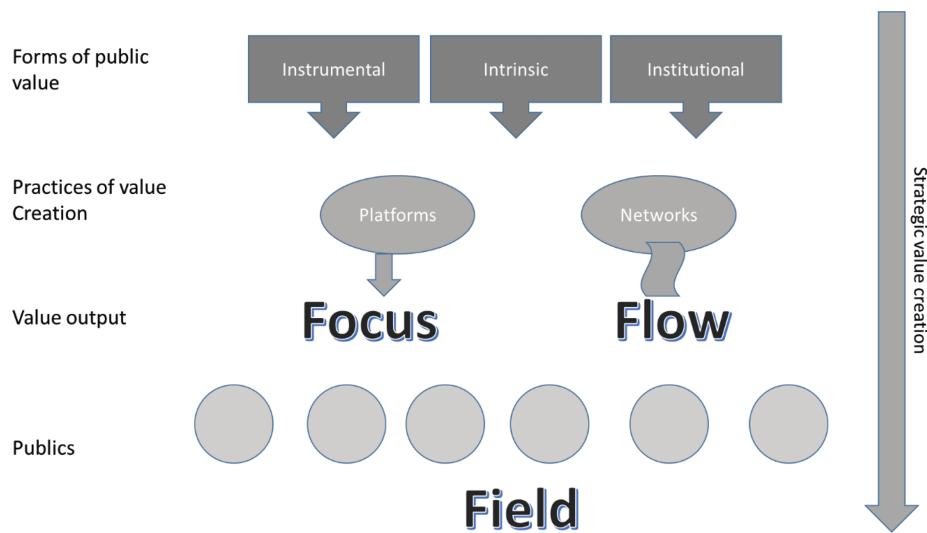


Figure 1. Strategic value creation through event networks and platforms.

suggest that more attention should now be paid to the institutional value that cities and regions can extract from events. Such institutional effects are also evident in the recent rise of urban event programming practices, and the growing involvement of cities in global urban networks.

This review of the literature around event networks and platforms in cities indicates that the study of event networks and platforms is often implicit rather than explicit. The network and platform concepts are rarely defined, and the terms are often used interchangeably and/or imprecisely. There is also relatively little attention for the value creation role of these elements. Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyze how different forms of value have been created by event networks and platforms in a city, and how these different forms of value evolve over time.

The Case of 's-Hertogenbosch

To analyze the relationship between a city and its event networks and platforms, we focus on the case of the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch). This southern city of 153,000 inhabitants has a long history of using events as an economic development tool. The city hosted the start of the Tour de France in 1996, has a well-developed portfolio of cultural and sporting events, and an events policy

geared to generating instrumental economic and image effects through city marketing (Gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch, 2006). Most major events hosted by Den Bosch, although successful, had little direct relationship to the city itself. In 2006 the city implemented a more structured event policy based on theme years. This led to the idea of staging a program of events linked to the medieval painter Hieronymus Bosch, who lived and worked in the city from which he took his name (Marques, 2013).

The Hieronymus Bosch Year in 2016 celebrated the 500th anniversary of the painter's death. The multiannual Bosch 500 program was designed to bring cultural, social, and economic vibrancy to the city. This was a major challenge for a small city, most notably because not one of his paintings remains in the city today. For years this hampered the city in using the famous artist as a brand or icon. In 2006 informal discussions were held on the possibility of staging a major Bosch exhibition in 2016, and an initial feasibility study was completed in 2007. An important part of the development strategy was securing the loan of paintings from other museums to stage a major exhibition in 2016.

To achieve this, a network of "Bosch Cities" was established, including all the cities that held paintings by Bosch. They then offered to research and restore the paintings at no cost to the owners, on condition that they lend the paintings to

the Noordbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch for a blockbuster exhibition in 2016. This strategy was extremely successful, eventually securing 17 of Bosch's 24 surviving paintings for an exhibition that attracted over 421,000 visitors. The overwhelming success of the exhibition seemingly distracted attention from the many other elements of the multiannual Bosch 500 program, and from the networks and platforms needed to make the program successful.

Methodology

The analysis of the networks and platforms in Den Bosch is based on interviews with key stakeholders in the city and the region and analysis of policy documents and statistical reports. Following the lead of Fisker et al. (2019), approaches drawing on the principles of relational comparison may stand to benefit from a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection that pays specific attention to the translocal context of events. The basic aim is to focus on the dynamics of event processes and practices of event value creation.

The study is based on a longitudinal analysis of the development, implementation, and legacy of the Bosch 500 program. Interviews with key players in the development of the program were held during three main periods, covering the development phase of the program (2011 and 2015), and the postevent period (2018). During the implementation of the main program in 2016, data were collected mainly through observations and informal interviews at different events. Over the period from 2011 to 2019, 29 stakeholders were interviewed, including representatives of local and regional government, the Bosch 500 Foundation responsible for running the program, tourism bodies, local associations, and businesses and cultural entrepreneurs. The selection of interviewees was made based on purposeful sampling, with an attempt to cover stakeholders closely involved in the process in the public, commercial, and voluntary sectors.

The interviews were semistructured, with interview guides developed for the different phases of the event. In the development phase interviewees were asked about their levels of support for the event and the (expected) effects of the development of the program on collaboration, networking,

and social cohesion. During the implementation phase questions were added about the actual effects of the event and event networks on the city. Post-event, interviewees were also asked to reflect on the legacy of the event, and areas where they thought the city and the event organization had performed well or failed to meet its objectives.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and entered into the ATLAS Ti program for analysis. Following an initial provisional coding based on previous studies (e.g., Agterberg, 2015; Beuks et al., 2011), thematic coding was applied to the transcripts and axial coding was used to identify linkages between thematic codes (Saldaña, 2009). The analysis of the interviews was supported by a review of relevant policy documents, reports, and statistical sources. These included the original plans for the event program, reports of meetings held during the event development process, and the evaluation report produced after the event by the municipality (Gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch, 2017). We also analyzed newspaper reports over the period 2013 to 2019, as well as videos of media reports and promotional material related to the event.

Findings

In the analysis, we pay attention to the interplay between events, actors, and structures, and in particular the way in which networks and platforms generate sustainable value. We first analyze the creation and development of the different networks related to the Bosch 500 program, the ways in which the city learned to use its networks, and various factors influencing the use of networks and platforms, including the need for vision, icon development, and knowledge generation, and finally we consider the legacy of the program.

The Bosch Program and its Networks

The analysis of the interviews revealed several key elements that contributed to the program, including the networks and network development, vision and leadership, the development of Bosch as an icon for the city, and the use of knowledge as a resource.

The Bosch 500 program was notable for integrating the development of a number of different networks, covering the local, regional, and international

context. The Bosch Cities Network created links with the cities that hold paintings by Hieronymus Bosch, including Berlin, Bruges, Brussels, London, Madrid, Paris, Venice, and Vienna. By launching the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP) to study the works of Bosch in all these cities, Den Bosch placed itself at the center of this network and knowledge about the painter. The Bosch 500 program was also selected as the “National Event Year” for the Netherlands in 2016. This brought partnerships with companies such as KLM and Dutch National Railways, aiming to direct tourist flows away from major tourist hotspots such as Amsterdam. The regional Brabant Museums Network focused on collective marketing of the seven large museums in the Province of Brabant, with contemporary interpretations of Bosch themes and the world of the medieval painter. Links were also forged with the Efteling, the largest theme park in the Netherlands, and various heritage organizations to create an experience based on the life and times of Bosch. The Bosch Parade brought together local artistic, cultural, and sporting organizations and individuals to create a phantasmagorical parade of figures and floats inspired by Bosch on the river around the city center (Agterberg, 2015).

Although these networks proved crucial to the eventual success of the program, the early development of the program revealed many barriers to collaboration. Interviews with the stakeholders in 2011 indicated that although collaboration between the Municipality, the cultural sector, and the Jeroen Bosch 500 Foundation was strong, collaboration with the commercial and voluntary sectors was weak. This related to the largely top-down nature of the program, inspired by a small team of people centered on the Municipality (Beuks et al., 2011).

The initial concentration of ideas and activities in the Municipality and the Bosch 500 Foundation meant that other partners often felt marginalized: “Collaboration, based on an underlying story, is not really there at the moment, although we certainly want to collaborate. We would like to do and mean more for them” (Director, Tourist Board South East Brabant, 2011). This feeling was shared by many in the commercial sector, who were afraid that the investment in elitist art would not succeed in generating a big audience and therefore an economic spin-off for the city (Beuks et al., 2011).

The cultural sector on the other hand was happy because they could see culture at the heart of the program. But there were discussions about the role of different cultural actors and their centrality in the program:

What kind of foundation would it be, hanging somewhere, abstract and well and there is nothing else. So, the foundation, and we can safely say that was partly laid by us. We are a kind of continuity in that because we already existed and we are a constant factor. (Director, Jeroen Bosch Art Centre, 2011)

Later it became clear how important the networks were for different parts of the program. As Wim van der Donk, the Commissioner of the King for the Province of Noord Brabant remarked:

The dream of Den Bosch was difficult for the city that wanted to put itself on the map as the city of Bosch without a single painting by Bosch. A major retrospective exhibition by Bosch seemed unrealistic. The city opted for a leading position in an international network based on knowledge, research and restorations. That turned out to be the key to the exhibition. (Interview, 2018).

Learning How to Use Networks to Generate Value

In order to utilize networks to stimulate flows of resources and attention, a process of network development had to be initiated. One important advantage for Den Bosch was previous experience of networking, through long-established networks such as the European Walled Towns. The former Mayor Ton Rombouts also underlines the importance of the city working with other networks in preparing the Bosch 500 program. The city had participated in the European Walled Towns network since 2004 and was also a member of the regional Brabantstad network, which brought together the main five cities in Brabant. Rombouts commented that the key was to “improve the network so that everybody benefits more,” increasing institutional value (Interview, 2018). Cities learn to use networks through collaboration practices, which became an important strategy for Den Bosch.

In retrospect, ambition was a driver of network development. The city was forced to make international links in order to stage a major Bosch

exhibition. This meant collaborating with other cities in the Bosch Cities Network. As Joks Jansen, leader of the Brabant Knowledge Organization noted in 2018, for smaller cities the use of such “network power” is particularly important, because this can create international links in arenas where bigger cities already have their long-established “pipelines.”

In addition to the international networks, building local support and connections was important for developing intrinsic value, for example in building local identity. Creative entrepreneur Ruth Giebels commented:

These projects make the connections between people closer . . . Den Bosch did that with events such as the Bosch Dinner, which brought all the neighborhoods of the city together. The Bosch Parade was also good for social cohesion, because it brought the associations together. These events acted as platforms to support networks, but now there is not much left. (Interview, 2019)

A program such as Bosch500 can create new forms of collaboration, and an alternative platform. New events can have the effect of breaking or bypassing existing structures, allowing new connections and platforms to emerge.

Vision and Risk Taking

Developing the Bosch500 program required a strong vision and a certain willingness to take risks. The long-term vision for the City of ‘s-Hertogenbosch was expressed very simply by Ton Rombouts: “we developed a ‘3C’ model: Culture, culture, culture.” By investing in culture, the economy and the overall quality of life in the city would arguably be improved. This consistent vision and the persistence of Mayor Ton Rombouts in pushing through his ideas helped to keep the program on track over many years (Charles de Mooij, Director of the Noordbrabants Museum, interview, 2019).

However, this apparent strength was also seen as a potential problem. Ton Rombouts summarized his approach to developing the program as follows: “every project needs a soul and 20 helpers” (Interview, 2018). This small group centered on the Municipality and the Bosch 500 Foundation also quickly became viewed as a clique. The

Chairman of one of the local associations commented in 2015:

Ton Rombouts has an annual party that is seen by a lot of people, it is very, very, yes . . . it is very Rombouts such a party. A lot of resources go into it and if you don’t link yourself to that, pretty soon you won’t get anything. (Director of Local Sports Association, interview, 2015).

This indicates that the Municipality was very focused on institutional value, perhaps to the detriment of other forms of value.

The close identification of the Bosch500 program with the Mayor led to discontent among key actors in the cultural field. In 2013 the Directors of the leading cultural institutions in the city, including the Noordbrabants Museum, venue for the Hieronymus Bosch exhibition, complained that they were being ignored by the Bosch500 program. This caused a crisis in the organization, which had to take immediate steps to head off criticism, including staging regular consultation meetings with the cultural sector and the general public (Richards & Duif, 2018).

Dependence on a small group also increased the vulnerability to personnel changes. Several interviewees discussed the problems caused by the retirement of Ton Rombouts as Mayor in 2017, not long after the completion of the program. Ruth Giebels noted that after the Mayor left his post and the Bosch500 Foundation was closed, the dynamic changed, and there was no leadership from the Municipality. Even the incoming Mayor, Jack Mikkers, noted in January 2019 that the city needed more courage, as it had demonstrated with the Bosch500 program. This was held up as an example of what the city could do given the vision and will.

Icons and Branding

The creation of a vision for Den Bosch was also linked to the painter Hieronymus Bosch as a figurehead or icon. Early surveys to gauge the level of support for Bosch as a symbol for the city indicated that over 80% of residents agreed that Bosch was a figurehead for the city (Richards & Duif, 2018), showing the intrinsic value for residents. However, the challenge lay in creating a meaningful bond between the city, its people, and the painter. Ad

's-Gravesande, Director of the Bosch 500 program, argued that it was important to have a physical link between the icon and the city. The Municipality did try to identify and purchase the house on the market square where Bosch allegedly lived and worked, but negotiations with the owners were drawn out so long that these plans were only formalized in 2019.

Despite the lack of physical links, the painter did arguably achieve iconic status: As Ad 's-Gravesande noted, "Hieronymus Bosch became the global icon for the small city of 's-Hertogenbosch, pushing the city up the international rankings and drawing worldwide attention." One of the reasons for this was the multiannual nature of the program, which, as Joks Janssen noted, gave the city the opportunity to place the spotlight on Hieronymus Bosch over a long time period and for different audiences (Interview, 2018). Another strategy was to emphasize the nostalgia generated by the idea of the painter returning home after 500 years. This idea was still being used by the Noordbrabants Museum in their most recent Bosch exhibition in 2018, in which "the earliest work of Bosch is back in his native city" (Noordbrabants Museum, 2018b).

The success of using Bosch as an icon has also stimulated the Noordbrabants Museum to focus on another figure from Brabant: Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh is much better known than Bosch, but he had a similar disadvantage for the museum—which before 2016 only had one painting by van Gogh. The Bosch exhibition stimulated the museum to purchase three more works by van Gogh at a total cost of almost 6 million euros. These purchases were made possible by the increased generosity of funders encouraged by the Bosch exhibition, and the museum was aware that it needed the pictures to lay a claim to van Gogh in the same way it had with Bosch (Charles de Mooij, interview, 2019).

The shift in attention from Bosch to van Gogh highlights one of the major challenges in using an icon such as Bosch, where there is a lack of physical presence. Ad 's-Gravesande wondered if the overwhelming attention for Bosch and his connection to the city could be maintained after the Bosch year in 2016, with weakening (political) attention and a fast disappearing sense of urgency. "The power of the icon stands or falls with its activation. It requires constant attention and development in the form of

program, visitable offer, knowledge development, and marketing" (Interview, 2018).

Knowledge Generation

Knowledge is another important resource for cities that want to generate value from networks or platforms. Networks can deliver important flows of knowledge from elsewhere that can provide the basis for innovation and creativity (Podestà & Richards, 2016). Knowledge generation was an important motivation behind the development of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP). The project opened doors to museums with works by Bosch, and helped to secure loans for the exhibition. Ton Rombouts emphasized: "The key was the development of the BRCP. The research was a smart way of getting the other museums to lend us their paintings for the exhibition." But perhaps even more important was the potential of the project to claim Bosch as an icon to the city, and to establish 's-Hertogenbosch as the hub for knowledge connected to Bosch. "The BRCP turned out to be a 'holy grail,' also for the general public. Not only in scientific circles" (Ad 's-Gravesande, interview, 2018).

Reflecting on the events of 2016, Joks Janssen argued the city should "bring the (Hieronymus Bosch) knowledge line further. That was the driving force behind the manifestation. Guarantee that knowledge, continue it and above all: institutionalize and localize it in Den Bosch. Make sure it gets a physical place in the city, one that builds on the network" (Interview, 2018). This is a plea for deriving increased institutional value from the networks created by the program.

However, it proved difficult to embed the global knowledge flows in the city in the longer term. The links to the Bosch500 networks still exist, but there is no platform in the city itself. Ruth Giebels lamented that "knowledge is leaking away. You can also see that elements related to the Hieronymus Bosch programme are being picked up by other cities. For example, in the development of a Bruegel Project for Breda, with Lian Duif (Programme Manager for Bosch500) and Ton Rombouts as advisers" (Interview, 2019).

The process of claiming knowledge for the city is also complicated. For example, a technique for

digitally stitching together images of paintings developed by the Bosch Research and Conservation Project is still the subject of a lawsuit, 3 years after the exhibition. The city also faced competition for the Bosch legacy from the Prado Museum in Madrid. As the owner of 14 paintings by Bosch, the Prado had a strong claim as a global hub for his work. Seeing the success of the Noordbrabants Museum in staging their Bosch exhibition, the Prado decided to organize its own exhibition, which attracted a record 589,692 visitors, more than the *Visions of Genius* exhibition held a few weeks previously. But the Prado also created a specific Bosch section of the museum, helping to increase the profile of the painter, and therefore indirectly of Den Bosch and the other “Bosch cities.”

Therefore, some leakage of knowledge can prove beneficial for the city, as is also the case with the knowledge gained in staging events. The Brabant Museums Network, which was originally formed to give a regional dimension for the Bosch program, is now being viewed as a possible basis for new collaborations around the Landscape Triennale in the Noord Brabant region in 2020. The success of the Bosch program, and the strengthening of Bosch as an icon, has also been an inspiration for the *Icons of Brabant* program developed by Visit Brabant (Vermeulen, 2017).

The Legacy of Event Networks

Chalip (2004) argued it is important to analyze events not just in terms of their short-term impacts, but also in terms of longer term legacies or effects. The short-term impacts of the Bosch 500 program were impressive (Richards & Duif, 2018), but there are also signs of longer term instrumental value increasing. Tourism growth has been maintained over the period 2017–2018 (Gemeente ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 2019), and event visits also continued to increase, with 6% more visitors in 2016 and 2% more in 2017. This has also stimulated business activity in the city center, with 2% more shops in 2016 and a 4% growth in 2017. This helped to decrease the number of empty business premises in the city significantly, particularly in comparison to nearby cities in the region (Gemeente ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 2019).

These positive trends are in turn linked to an important legacy of the Bosch 500 program—

increased self-confidence of institutions in the city. The Noordbrabants Museum has become more ambitious, staging more Bosch-related events in 2017 and 2018, and developing Vincent van Gogh as a new icon. The museum launched a new strategy in 2016, “designed to capitalize on the success of the Bosch program” (Charles de Mooij, interview, 2019). The objectives of the strategy “could easily be called ambitious” (Noordbrabants Museum, 2018a), aiming to become one of the top museums outside the Randstad and being a “must see” for all inhabitants of Noord Brabant. The extra capacity and expertise required for the exhibition had not only pushed the museum to operate at higher levels, but also raised ambition levels in line with this. This new confidence also spread to other cultural institutions. Viktorien van Hulst, director of the city’s network of cultural directors, said “we had a great year during the Bosch Year, and in the last 2 years we almost exclusively discussed the positioning of the city.”

This confidence also spread to the tourism sector, with the Chair of the local Hotel Association calling for an expansion of capacity in the city. This call is being answered, with the Municipality outlining plans for 400–450 new hotel rooms, representing a growth of over 60% compared with current capacity. As Charles de Mooij noted, local businesses had been stimulated by the Bosch program into investing in events, not just in 2016, but also subsequently (Interview, 2019).

Another important institutional legacy has been the increased contacts made as a result of the program. Ruth Giebels felt the Bosch 500 project had made the connections between people in the city closer, and that these ties became stronger when people worked outside the city. She cited the example of one marketer who gained international experience as a result of the Bosch 500 program, who now has contacts with international journalists and media that he can use for local projects. “It works like a stain that slowly spreads to the areas around it. Not dramatic, but slowly you see that something is there” (Interview, 2019).

Despite the success of the program and its positive legacies, there is an important discourse about missed opportunities. During the program there was a recognizable platform for events and activities related to Bosch and culture in general. After

2016 this platform disappeared, because the funding was no longer available, attention was diverted elsewhere. In fact, some respondents noted a negative reaction on the part of Municipal officials, who were “tired of Bosch”:

After Bosch 500 there is a lack of a platform. But people are more willing to work together than before. The entrepreneurs in the city have woken up to the possibilities, and are keen to follow up on the success of Bosch 500. But the officials are Bosch tired. They don't need to do anything, so they don't bother. (Ruth Giebels, interview, 2019)

The decline of networks and platforms after 2016 is seen by some respondents as a missed opportunity. When an event seeks to position itself as a “once in a lifetime opportunity” (Cook, 2016), it may not be surprising that afterwards people move on to new opportunities. The close identification of the Bosch500 project with the former Mayor may also have had a role, as actors who felt marginalized by his approach attempted to develop new agendas. Lian Duif noted that the development of “counter-movements” to the program:

Also has to do with ownership and jealousy and it is not yours and you did not invent it. . . . But we have seen that in other European cultural capital programs. I think there is always a counter movement. . . . The strange thing is that the body which initiated the program, the Municipality, ultimately formed the counter-movement. (Interview, 2019)

This shows that during a long development process, institutional value can not only be created, but also destroyed.

In fact, looking back over the development of the program, one can see that the development of a platform around Bosch500 continually involved moments of struggle and resistance. The network analysis undertaken in the early stages of program development (Beuks et al., 2011) revealed a division between the support of the Municipality and the cultural institutions and the opposition of the commercial sector, which doubted the potential for economic impact. Different divisions surfaced in 2013, when the Directors of the leading cultural institutions opposed the plans of the Bosch500 Foundation, arguing that existing projects should be supported instead of new ones. These divisions

appeared to fade as the program developed and the different actors could see the value they could derive from it. But in the legacy phase, interest groups within the Municipality became “tired of Bosch,” while the original opponents, the commercial sector, pleaded for another Bosch Year.

Conclusions

To return to the original research question: how did Den Bosch derive strategic value from its event-related networks and platforms? The Bosch 500 program undoubtedly managed to develop intrinsic value for the residents of Den Bosch and for visitors to the many events in the program. Satisfaction levels and intention to return were high. Identification with Bosch as a figurehead also grew to the extent that there was disappointment that the city couldn't do more after 2016. The short-term instrumental value of the program was also high, generating significant tourism flows and expenditure. The post-2016 data also indicate long-term instrumental value in terms of business growth and tourism.

These successes were in large part due to the development of networks that generated a flow of resources and platforms that focused attention on the painter and his city. This growth in institutional value should also have been the basis on which sustainable value creation practices could have been embedded in the civic administration. Instead, a “Bosch-tired” municipality moved on to new agendas, leaving the Noordbrabants Museum as the only institution that could support the continuity of networks and provide a platform for Bosch. The museum has managed to shift the successful value creation practices of the Bosch500 program into a new focus on Vincent van Gogh, providing a basis for future intrinsic and instrumental value creation for the future.

Our analysis seems to confirm the shifting value agenda in events from instrumental towards intrinsic and institutional value. There has already been a lot of attention paid to the short-term instrumental value of events, particularly in terms of economic and social impacts, and more research is now emerging on intrinsic value analyzed from a consumer perspective. But a challenge remains in analyzing the institutional value of events, particularly as the range of stakeholders involved in

organizing and funding events grows. Adopting a network perspective can add value by illuminating the process by which value is collectively created or destroyed through event partnerships and collaborations. Wilson et al. (2017) suggested a need to study the development of networks of relationships over time, and the current article has shown the added value of expanding from a snapshot of the Den Bosch networks into a longitudinal analysis. This reveals the power struggles around different forms of value and the challenges of maintaining stakeholder attention for an event program over a period of years. As Fisker et al. (2019) indicated, the extension of event networks nationally and internationally also calls for a translocal approach to event network research. By studying the shifts in value creation in different network locations, it should be possible to trace the influence of the global space of flows on the local space of places (Castells, 2009), and vice versa. In the case of Den Bosch, it can be argued that making links between local networks and global flows of power were vital in creating the Bosch500 program. This requires, as Castells argued, a group of capable “switchers” who recognize the ways in which the value of locality can be effectively levered at global level. Event programs can then become valuable tools for these switchers to create networks to provide local-global linkages and platforms that will focus global attention on the local.

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